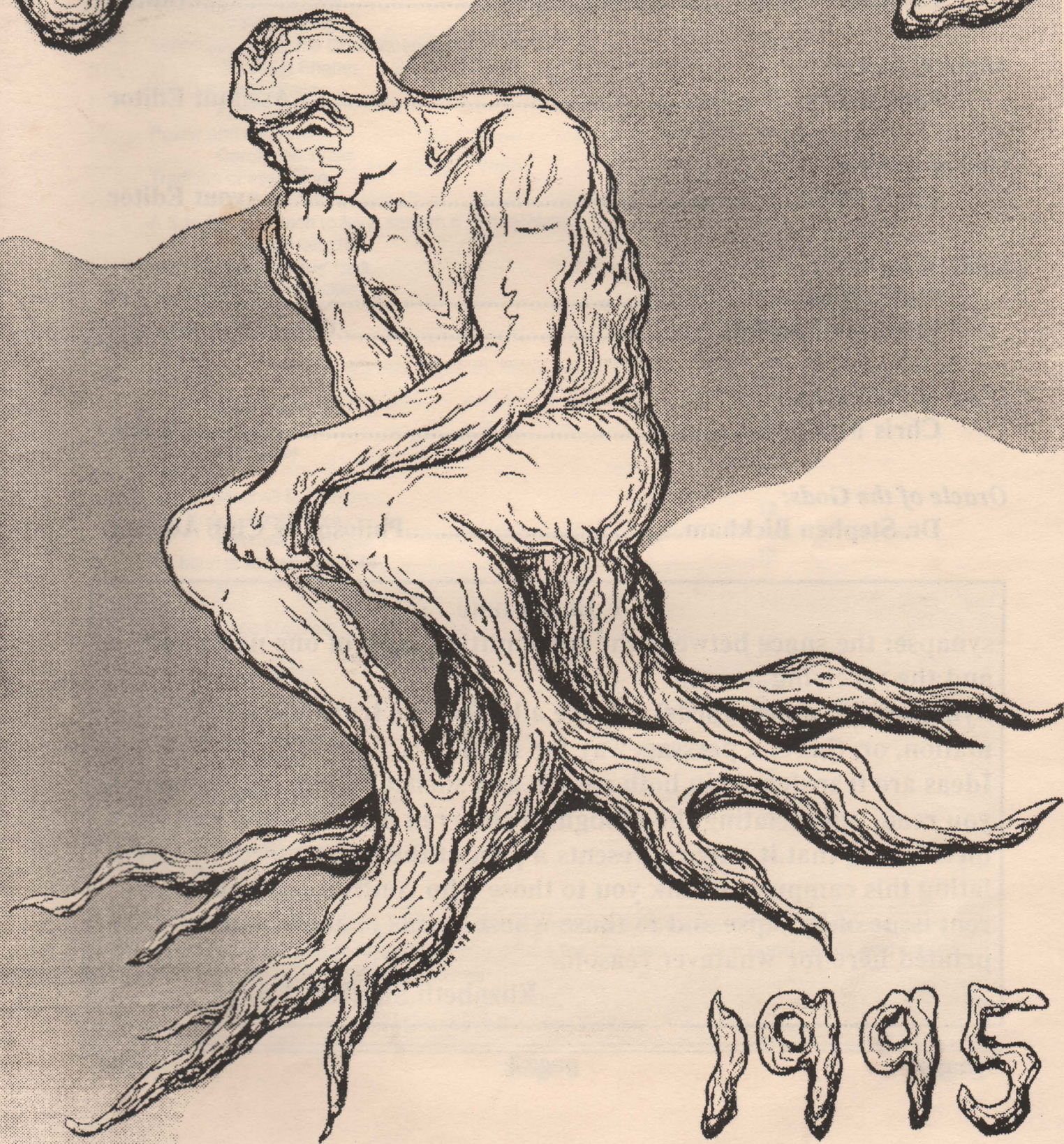


SYNOPSIS



1995

Synapse Pantheon

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Editor's note

synapse: the space between the transmitting axon of one nerve cell and the receiving neuron.

Synapse: (in other words) a space allowing the transmission of information, or, (here) a passageway for ideas.

Ideas are transferred in both speech and silence. Keep this in mind as you read, appreciating the thought tranferred here in word and remembering that it only represents a part of the ideas currently circulating this campus. Thank you to those who contributed to the current issue of Synapse and to those whose words or ideas are not printed here for whatever reason.

Elizabeth Shaffer, Editor

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The editorial staff of Synapse and the philosophy club would like to extend sincere thanks and appreciation to the Flashlight office for the use of their computers and paper to type and create this issue of Synapse.

Thank You,
Elizabeth Shaffer, Editor

No one hears our nightly prayers

Danielle Hampton

We live in a predominantly Christian society that preaches the word of an all knowing, all powerful God. We are taught to have faith in this God, and live by his moral standards. We are to look to him for consolation in times of need, we are to ask his forgiveness when we have sinned. If we follow his doctrine, set forth in the Bible, we are promised future rewards in the hereafter. We will be delivered from the power of sin, a concept referred to as salvation. Only God knows what we are destined to be, and all that occurs in our lives is God's will. To many, this belief system is comforting, knowing that someone is watching over us, taking care of us, and listening to our prayers. However, there is a body of thought that states that this, along with other conceptions of some sort of supernatural being or God, is a false sense of security. One particular man, a French philosopher whose ideas became quite well known in western culture during the late 40's and early 50's, believes that if we do not come to the realization that our lives are ours and ours alone we will never be truly free. This man, a self proclaimed existentialist, is Jean Paul Sartre.

Sartre claims that there is no God to give meaning to our lives; life has meaning only after we give it meaning. There is no God to tell us right from wrong, there is no God to console or forgive us, no one watching over

us, and no one hears our nightly prayers. This idea is unsettling for many people because what it ultimately comes down to is this: each and every one of us, who is of an age of awareness and who possesses all of his or her mental faculties, is responsible for his or her own life. This idea of strict accountability is the basis on which Sartre's entire philosophy rests. He believes that we cannot blame our upbringing, our environment, or even society as a whole. We chose to be who and what we are, therefore we must face the consequences of all our actions as well as our inactions. During Sartre's later years he seems to have softened up a little, in that he realizes certain socio-economic situations may take away our ability to choose for ourselves. For example, a person that grows up in a society that lacks basic resources, such as food, water and shelter, must rely on others for their subsistence. They are dependent on others, therefore many of their choices are made for them. The rest of us however, must be held strictly accountable.

Sartre believes that at every moment we are choosing not only for ourselves but for all mankind. We choose the path we perceive to be best and hope for others to follow suit. This does not mean we should tell others how we think they should live, nor should we judge their choices, it simply means that each of us should live by example. This deep

responsibility to ourselves, as well as others leaves us with a sense of anguish. This anguish is inescapable, it comes with the realization that the future depends on us. We are in control, we must make things right, no one can do it for us.

Once we have chosen our path we must put our actions into action. For Sartre, all goodness is in action. We are a sum of all our acts, without action we are nothing. Our experiences give meaning to our lives. Sartre insists that we cannot look outward to a God for meaning, only by doing do we make our lives meaningful. This brings us to Sartre's concepts of acting in good or bad faith. An act of good faith is one in which we have chosen the one that we would hope all others would choose in similar situations. Our ability to reason is what makes this process possible. Sartre believes that those who say, "What is right for me may not be right for you," are copping out. He believes that the person who believes such things really means, "I am right and you are wrong, but you can believe what you want." Sartre believes that you must always stand up for your actions, if you don't you must not have good faith in the first place. This is not to say that you should tell others they must act the same as you, it only means that you should always defend your actions because you have acted in a way you see best. Those who try to escape this responsibility to themselves as well as to others, are acting in bad faith. Those who blame others for their misfortune, or make excuses for their actions are acting in bad faith. Good intentions mean

nothing while good acts mean everything.

Another issue that Sartre addresses in his philosophy is death. He believes that it is very important for each of us to face the fact that we are mortal and that someday each of us will die. That day may not come for many years or that day may come tomorrow. In any event, our future is uncertain owing to death, therefore we must live life in the present. Many believe that there is a place called heaven, or for the less fortunate, hell. Sartre is not among these believers. Once we die, according to Sartre, there is only nothingness. In his view the idea of a hereafter came about to curb the fear of death that has been instilled in many of us since an early age. We are taught that death is some horrible event that takes place in the distant future, of which we should not think. Sartre, on the other hand stresses how natural death is, and that we have no reason to fear it because in death there is no consciousness. Where there is no consciousness there is no pain or fear, there is only nothingness. Once we face our inevitable death, we will be much more aware of our present. We will begin to live in the here and now which in turn will help us appreciate life to the fullest.

Just as we must not always live for the future because of its uncertainty, we must also not live in the past. The past is only memory, it cannot be changed or manipulated. It is fixed in time therefore, we need not concern ourselves with it. The only value the past should have on our lives is the lessons from which it came. Only the present can have

meaning because the present is the only time we can have experiences, and experience is what gives meaning to our lives.

Sartre acknowledges that with his philosophy comes forlornness. This forlornness comes from knowing that God does not exist, we are essentially alone and therefore responsible for ourselves. Life would be easier if there was a God to shrug our responsibility on to. We are condemned to be free. We are free to choose our existence, yet we are completely responsible for the consequences of our actions. We are free to choose, yet we must ask ourselves at every moment, "What if others did as I am doing, what if everybody did as I am doing?" We cannot act in good

faith without addressing these questions.

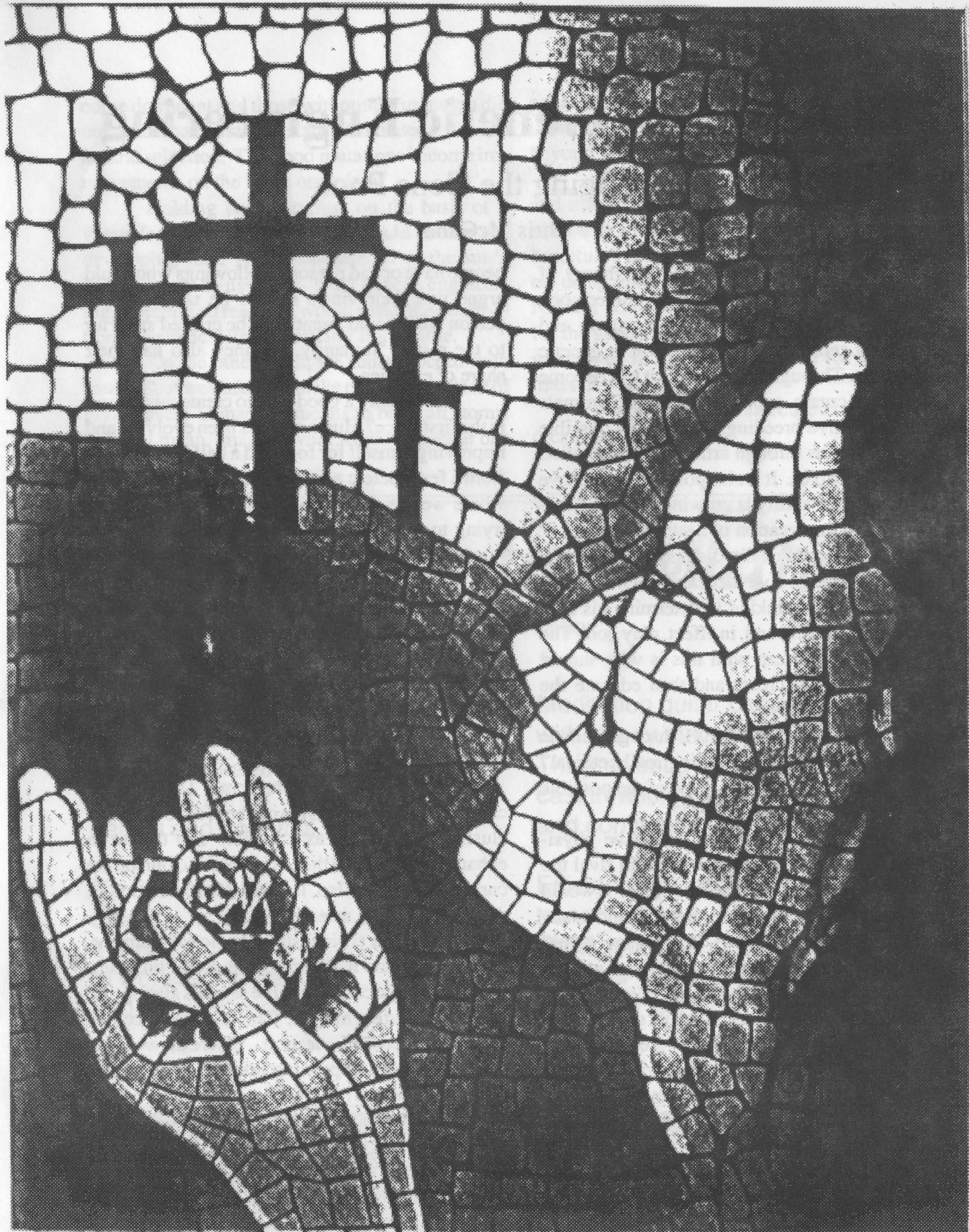
We are told since childhood that life is never easy, this certainly holds true with Sartre's philosophy, however the added burden of strict accountability makes it even more so. The hardest part is the revelation that we are responsible, once we begin to incorporate this way of thinking into our daily lives we begin to see the rewards that come with it. We are free. We are in control of our lives, we can move forward and attempt to achieve the "good life." Our achievements mean much more to us knowing that they are ours and ours alone. Only when we stop looking outside of ourselves and begin to look inward can we find true peace.

untitled

by W.C. Davis

Sometimes I feel dead,
empty inside as an empty husk in a winter solstice
blown from field to field by the wind's icy hands
piercing my soul;. . . an empty pain.
Sometimes I feel angry
full of an undirected fury
waiting to be released on an unsuspecting
individual who doesn't even deserve my grief.
So Angry. . . So what.
sometimes I'm sad
and I could cry an ocean of tears
wallowing in self pity
and drowning in "should have beens"
But. . . sometimes I'm happy
I radiate myself
Like the summer sun
spreading warmth and smiles
like a clown at a child's communion.
Funny, huh?
Sometime's I'm human.
How about you?





copyright Elizabeth Shaffer

The Ethics of Genetic Engineering

Or bridging the Gene Pool

by Chris McGann

When Mendel discovered the theory of genes in the nineteenth century, he stumbled upon one of the great sciences of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is known as genetic engineering. Through this process, it has become possible to create superior breeds of animals through selective breeding. It is already possible to create humans through artificial insemination and test tube babies. It is also possible to improve humans and this ability is growing. It may eventually lead to the creation of a super-human.

One could easily dismiss genetic engineering as some goofy Nazi experiment but it is now possible for mankind to determine his own evolutionary destiny and, in effect, play god. The most obvious problem with this is who should have the power to create and then educate the "Perfect Human (P.H.)?"

Is the pursuit of the P.H. through genetic engineering or selective breeding really ethical? More importantly, what are some of the possible implications of creating the P.H?

The hypothetical P.H. would be physically superior to the point that it would rival the super heroes in old, cheesy comic books. It would also have the mental capacity that could make Einstein look like Beavis. This person would have little problem taking over anything it wanted (Russia, the mass media, the automotive industry, the New York Jets) and use it for its own means.

What is perfect and who's idea of perfect should be used? Obviously, the majority of people in the world don't want the ethic instilled in the P.H. to resemble somebody like Charles Manson, Adolph Hitler, or Ho Chi Minh. But what about Timothy Leary, Rush Limbaugh, Jessie Jackson, Bob Dole, Bob Dylan, Pat Robertson, Bob Marley, Newt Gingrich, or John Kennedy? All of these

people have or had personal followings who could argue that their views should be taught to the person who would eventually be created superior to the rest of humanity, but they also had their share of enemies.

Is it really a good idea to create this person in the first place? Humanity has been evolving and improving himself for four and a half billion years from a few nucleic acids in the primordial soup to where we are today. But what point is there to trying to improve ourselves if some college kid mixes some sex cells in a test tube and creates the P.H. out of thin air? On the other hand, is this as far as we want to evolve and improve?

Some might argue that genetic engineering IS the next step in our evolution. Through genetic engineering, a cure for cancer may be found. It may also help to prevent other genetic problems such as Downs Syndrome and mental retardation.

Here is the real problem. The cure for cancer may be the first step on the road toward that elusive P.H. If we as a society don't want to enhance humans like that, is it ethical to pursue the cure for cancer? Also, is medicine a violation of the law of natural selection?

This is a typical slippery slope argument. In order to refute it, one must show that tinkering with the genetic code is not the same as attempting to create a perfect human. The discussion comes down to one central question. Where do we draw the line between improving humans and creating the perfect human?

I propose that it would be ethical to fix what is wrong but not improve on the basic human. In other words, stopping the dreaded cancer is not unethical, but creating a human with three arms intentionally might be. Evolution is based on mutations. The good mutations eventually be-

come dominant and those without the mutation die out. The bad mutations are eliminated. This is natural selection. The good mutations become improvements on the basic organism.

Holding back progress on the basis of a vague fear is not logical. That would be like not developing solar power because all of the sun's energy might be used up! With genetic engineering, stopping all research would make the elimination of genetic defects virtually impossible.

On the other hand, we must proceed with caution lest we make a mistake on the magnitude of giving every human the means to build an atomic bomb. I mean, imagine what would happen if one

country perfected the P.H. and built an army out of these people, world domination would not be beyond the realm of possibilities.

The point is we must proceed with caution and make the goal of genetic research to prevent problems and not to create something that will be harmful. For instance, let's learn from our mistake of using nuclear energy for nuclear weapons. Nuclear power is a great thing when used properly for the generation of electricity but it becomes the worst idea in history when used for weapons of mass destruction.

So go right ahead and cure cancer, but don't create Super-Hitler.

Existential Mirth

by Kim Miller

Sweating dreams, purity
comes in great
inhalations of creation
steeped in life and light
and other things
genius and beautiful.

Dizzy in sunlight
dazzling in moonlight
it is only right
to worship the earth
and pity its people.

Meditation guitar goddess
with honey mellow voice.
Thick sweet gentle existence
cast in wildflower colors
and constant improvisations.

Existence preceding apathy,
transcending it, nullifying it.
Realizing existence is Being-
Being is glory,
Being is Hell.

**"Mirrors and copulation are abominable because they both
increase the number of humans."**

Borges

Intentionality and the Consequences

by Elizabeth Shaffer

There is an old saying that "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." This is a rather crude approach to the idea of intentionality. Assuming rational, reasonable people intend to follow a course of action dictated by their desires and beliefs, one would assume that good intentions should lead to good consequences. However, as life seldom works out in a way that anyone intends, that appears to be one truth to the old saying.

And what of "bad" intentions? What if "A" desires to kill someone, a very specific someone, "B"? Desire is not always followed by action. Desire, then, needs more. So suppose "A" actually believes that killing "B" is a good idea. Maybe there's a will leaving "A" property, or maybe "A"'s life would just be ever so much easier without "B". Or so "A" believes. Now desire and belief team up in "A", and the intent is formed. "A" now intends to kill "B". A gun is bought, the timing is picked, all is ready, and "A" shoots. This has got to be the biggest blunder a human being can commit; murdering the wrong person. "A" killed "C" by mistake.

So, did "A" intend to kill "C"? The answer would at first seem to be "no". "A" intended to kill "B". "A" just screwed up, majorly. Yet the intent to commit murder was there. "A" intended to murder another human being. If I intend to ride a horse but fall off, or intend to drive a car but crash into a tree, no one would say I wasn't riding a horse or driving the car. They might say I did a very poor job, they might even say I failed to do what I wanted adequately. But I did intend the act if not the consequences. The consequence is that "C" is dead while "B" still lives. The anticipated consequence, "B"'s death, did not follow. Yet when a person acts, he acts in a way that, while it is anticipated to lead to certain consequences, may not lead to those consequences, yet is done

with the same intent with which I drive a car. I may not intend to crash, but a rational and reasonable human intending to drive a car understands that risks are involved, and consequences may change. Yet most people intend to and do drive anyway. As we cannot control anything but ourselves and our actions, if we are to be held responsible for anything, it must be for our actions and intended actions. Although "A" may not have intended to kill "C", "A" did intend to kill. The only "accident" here is which person died.

So what is involved when "A" strikes "B" without planning or desiring or intending to kill "B"? Again the real consequences and the anticipated consequences may differ. The main difference though lies in the desire and belief and intent. While in the first case "A" desired "B" dead, believed "B"'s dying was a good idea, and acted on that belief, believing as well that those actions would lead to "B"'s demise, in the second case "A" does not believe "B" will die, or that "B"'s death is a good thing. "A" may just believe that "B" needs a good swat to wake her up and that the blow will do nothing more than that. "A" does not desire "B"'s death, "A" does not believe "B" will die, or that "B" should die. But fate again lends a hand, and the tree against which "B" falls, falls on "B" and kills her. Without either the desire or belief, can we say that "A" intended to kill "B"? If we take the stance of before, that "A" cannot control consequences, but only control actions designed to attain anticipated consequences, then "A" is not guilty of intending to kill someone. "A" only intended to injure someone. Unless, with the lack of information given here, we are assuming that "A" is not intending or anticipating the tree falling.

However, if "A" did something more drastic, like pushing "B" off of a skyscraper, we might

assume more in the way of intent. Most rational and reasonable people would be assumed to anticipate such a fall to cause death to the person falling. Generally most people would consider it a miracle if the person didn't die. So any rational person pushing "B" off a skyscraper would certainly be anticipating and therefore intending "B"'s death. To believe that "B" wouldn't die would be pretty irrational, and, unless they believed that, then the act of pushing would indicate desire for the consequence of "B"'s death.

But what if "B" didn't die from the fall? Or what if "B" died from something else, like a gunshot wound received on the way down. "A" still intended to kill "B", just, as in the first case, didn't succeed as planned.

Who shot "B"? A careless shot out of the window by someone playing with a gun they thought was not loaded. After all, not many people would anticipate or expect anyone to be out there, or the gun to be loaded, or to hit someone outside without aiming. We are again making an assumption, that the gun wasn't aimed. It could have been aimed, in a playful manner, at the obnoxious being out there, the dreaded ex-lover of the one holding the gun. That action, pulling a gun's trigger, resulted in death. And though "C" actually wanted her obnoxious ex-lover dead, she really had not believed she would ever kill him. She may not have known anyone else had wanted him dead enough to push him off a skyscraper while she was playing with guns, or, if she were rational, would probably have figured that her desire was being met without any additional action on her part, especially the sort of action that might lead to unpleasant additional consequences, such as jail. Looked at logically, no reasonably rational person is going to shoot someone out the window of a skyscraper who will be dying in only a few seconds anyway, even if they do want them dead. Most people could wait the extra three seconds and see someone else blamed for the murder. "C" didn't believe she'd kill "B", or

anticipate causing "B"'s death. At most "C" intended to play with guns, which, though a reckless pursuit, and dangerous to passerby, is not intending to kill someone. It may be construed as intending to endanger others, endanger someone, but, like the head blow, does not intend death by that action. She got her wish, but that was it.

But what if two people intend the same thing? What if they both carry out actions anticipated logically to produce "B"'s death? "B" doesn't die twice. Yet might not both be culpable in their actions and intent? One administers poison, that ought to do the trick. Unless, of course, the poison isn't poison, but only a strong laxative. The other helps with the murder, or making it the person to be poisoned; self-murder, or suicide. After all, they believe, they're dying anyhow, they might as well make "A" happy by their ("B"'s) death and speed up the dying a little. So "B" commits suicide, or believes it to be for the same reason "A" believes it to be murder, neither knowing the poison is just a laxative. "B" believes he's dying anyway so he believes eating the poison will kill him quicker (good thing he doesn't know its a laxative). "A" believes "B" will die from the "poison". But once again fate takes a hand and consequences are not as anticipated. "B" dies alright, but of a heart attack (probably due to the stress of trying to figure out whether to die now or later!). "B" didn't poison himself, "A" didn't even kill him. "B" may have contributed to his own death and so fulfilled part of his intent, again by poor management rather than good planning.

As culpability in this paper seems based on actions anticipated or reasonably expected to lead to certain consequences, actions chosen to attain certain desired consequences and believed capable of attaining those consequences, both the last "A" and "B" are guilty of intending the murder of "B". As usual, nothing worked out right, but not from lack of good, or in this case "bad" intentions.

If actions are culpable when they are

intended to attain certain consequences of "evil" nature, then they could be considered "bad" or "evil", and would certainly "lead one to hell". I can't see how "good intentions" or at least intentions toward good consequences can be as culpable as those leading to "bad" consequences. Therefore I would assume little truth to the saying "the road to hell is paved with good intentions," unless someone took a view that held people responsible for "fate". Anticipated consequences are goals, real consequences are not always controllable, these I do not believe are centrally important to the concept of intentionality except as the focus of the intent.

There are two problems that I glossed over here. One less important pertains to the concept that this saying alludes to, that intentions are not always followed by actions, even the best of intentions are not always followed by action. Without action, however, intention appears much like a cognitive version of the concept of desire.

The other problem is that of desire logically but unconsciously connecting when we unconsciously aim for a goal. An unconscious

intent could be spurred by either conscious or unconscious desire to attain a goal by pursuing actions designed to attain a certain consequence. Masquerading as a lack of intent, the subconscious could claim innocence while arranging things to suit our desires without our facing the possibility of undesirable or different consequences. After all, we can't consciously face or find a way to do something without considering the problems inherent in a certain action. If we don't consciously face it then we avoid facing negative consequences or less appealing alternatives. Most people wouldn't allow themselves to commit murder or step far out of societal boundaries. If Freudian slips are more than verbal slips of unconscious desire, than the implications for intentionality might expand. I see no way yet though, even if such slips do drive us, to hold us culpable for them on the basis that they are no more under our conscious direction, and therefore, control. If such were considered that important then it might be better to view culpability only on the basis of actions, with no consideration of intent.

Possessions

by Mitchell L. Hillman

The use
of things
Held so dear
so near
Your heart
is nothing
They are as
immaterial
Physical manifestations
of your
Emotional Walls.

"The message is clear:
Think for yourself and
question authority."

Dr. Timothy Leary

Zen knock-knock joke

by Mitchell L. Hillman

Knock-Knock.

Who's there?

No one.

Reality

by Chris McGann

WHAT'S REALITY?

Is it simply what we can
see, hear, smell, taste, feel?

WHAT'S REALITY?

A myriad small charges
from science lessons?

WHAT'S REALITY?

Many colors projected
by higher beings?

WHAT'S REALITY?

If we are simply a dream
of gods we create?

WHAT'S REALITY?

One sees visions; or nothing
or when one is deaf?

WHAT'S REALITY?

What is the meaning of life
as viewed from the grave?

WHAT'S REALITY?

Does it happen when I dream
or upon waking?

WHAT'S REALITY?

Haunting images conjured
by magic mushrooms?

WHAT'S REALITY?

To a first dimensional
being; a straight line?

WHAT'S REALITY?

The lower (?) intelligence
of the savage beast.

WHAT'S REALITY?

Oblivious rocks and trees:
"I don't think, am I?"

WHAT'S REALITY?

It's only our perceptions
of the universe.

WHAT'S REALITY?

Have you seen the face of God?
Can you be so sure?

The unforged chain

by Kate Serra

"Every day of our lives, we are dying." Each day brings us closer to death, monster under the bed. And no one talks about it. No one knows now. What is death except for the dying? Death to the living is grief. Grief is finding the end of the path and recognizing it. Grief is finding that end but refusing it. Name it, to empower it, to let it lose upon the world. I am so SICK of dying. I don't spend my life existing; I want to LIVE. And that's why no one talks about the dying. . . it might catch up with the whisperer. Spread like a disease. But it's not the fact of death that paralyzes, it's the repression of its awareness. So that every person who faces death feels ALONE . . . when in fact the whole world is standing back to back to back to back.

My mind is sometimes tofu

by Mitchell L. Hillman

My mind is tofu-

soft, liquid and luxurious
Dripping through the pores and pits
of every hole within my self.
Wax oozing away from its candle of origin.
My mind is sometimes soft.

My mind is tofu-

spongy, spacious and absorbent
ready to fill with everything around it.
Filling until full for the moment then
drying to the marrow of the soul
Ready to fill again, a dry paper towel
pulled off the roll.

My mind is sometimes spongy.

My mind is tofu-

Firm, resilient, rubbery.
Snapping back into form after endless
Twists and contortions.
Responsive to its experience and collective
Of all the sweet stuff-the meat of life.

My mind is sometimes firm.

My mind is tofu-

Hard, boiled, cooked just right
Baked, grilled, or fried.
After marinating and the correct heat
It transforms to something it wasn't before
Becoming something new, something different
Something true.

My mind is sometimes hard.

Power and Oppression

by Carolynne Timko
Lock Haven University

The Nature of Oppression

In her article "Oppression", Marilyn Frye uses the image of the bird cage to describe the systemic nature of oppression. This is a particularly good image to describe oppression, as it is an image to which most people can relate. When we look at the individual aspects of a woman's life and existence, it may not seem that she is oppressed. Common occurrences, such as a man opening a door for a woman seem to be courtesies, but as Frye points out, the underlying message is that women are helpless and dependent.

Using this image of a bird cage, Frye explains why it is essential, when discussing oppression or the quality of women's lives, to take the macroscopic view rather than the microscopic view. Frye asserts that one cannot see the meaning of seemingly innocuous rituals, like door opening, etc. if one simply takes each act on its own merit and circumstance. In order to see oppression of any sort, it is essential that one stand back and see the whole picture. She adds that it "seems sometimes that people take a deliberately myopic view and fill their eyes with things seen microscopically in order not to see macroscopically." (13) It is easier to justify the oppression of any group if attention is drawn away from that oppression and focussed on aspects which seem to be liberating or free of oppression, i.e., a man opens a door for a woman and removes that barrier for her to allow easy progress through the door, thus treating her with courtesy and respect. Men's acts of "courtesy" are indeed acts of oppression for they send the message that women are lesser beings, are fragile or frail, and therefore need to have "done" for them, need to be treated differently than "regular" people.

This sort of oppression is not limited to women. Every "non-white male" group is oppressed by the white male power structure in society, but this oppression is not always visible or clearly defined. The use of women, people of colour and people whose appearance or demeanor is meant to stereotype other marginalized groups in society, e.g., gays and lesbians, has redefined racism in American culture.

Some people will argue that women who choose to pose nude in "Playboy", etc., do it voluntarily and therefore are neither being exploited nor oppressed. This is a narrow, micro view of the problem. Frye argues that it is important to take individual actions and practices, view them from a distant perspective, and consider all their ramifications. It may be true that individuals very often participate in their own continued oppression. For example, women who participate in pornographic films propagate the image and stereotype of women as sexual playthings who are dominated by men and serve their needs. The immediate gratification achieved from an action or situation, be it fame, money, a sense of power or accomplishment, unfortunately overrides the "big picture" and results in stereotyping which propagates oppression. If these women took a macro view of their actions and saw the overall impact such actions have on women and the way they are viewed by men, then perhaps they would not participate in those actions.

In the micro view we may think that these women choose their actions, but in the macro view, we can see that they are being used because of their sex, the degree to which they meet the definition of the ideal (blonde, buxom, blue-eyed and pouty-lipped), the degree of

public exposure they may have as an athlete, etc., and how they can sell the product, idea, way of life or myth the corporate power structure is trying to create. All of this is in order to control the masses of people and make them think that they are free, happy and will become wealthy like their heroes.

Another example of the oppression of non-white male groups is demonstrated by the abundance of television shows centered around the black family. Shows like "Cosby" portrayed the black family as upwardly mobile middle class. As Gates points out in his article "TV's Black World Turns-But Stays Unreal", Cosby is one of the dominant blacks on television. When he does commercials for financial institutions, Cosby sends the message that blacks are solely responsible for their social conditions. Since he has worked hard and has become a success, every other black person should be able to do the same thing. By using Cosby- a well known and respected black actor to propagate this myth, the white male power structure has a strong support for the oppression of the black community and culture. This is subtle and invidious because many look to Cosby as a role model and success story, an example to be followed.

Many black athletes are used in the same way to advertise sports products, autos, deodorant, etc. The fact that one out of hundreds of athletes becomes a star and earns a great deal of money is irrelevant. The message sent to young people is "If you buy the product which I am endorsing, you will be like me." For many people living in depressed circumstances, this sends a false but very tempting message.

If Cosby, or Bo Jackson or Shaquille O'Neal can be very successful, then any black person can be like them and those who do not succeed have only themselves to blame. The problem with using well known people as product endorsers is that many young people today identify with them as role models and heroes. They do not understand that this exploitation is harmful and oppressive.

This is the "American Dream" which has become engendered in the culture. By using heroes who are members of marginalized minority groups, the message sent to consumers is "See what I choose to do," i.e., I choose to smoke, to drink, etc. This coercion to adopt a lifestyle prescribed for us by business and the white male power structure can be seen in no other way than oppressive, racist and sexist.

The Power Structure

In this capitalist patriarchy, power is held by the white male minority who control the remainder of the population. Power is the control of every facet of life, i.e., goods and services, the means of production, the institutions of society such as military, political and educational institutions, and the socialization of every member of society. This power is so firmly entrenched in the social structure that it is pervasive and often acceptable, or unnoticed. The exertion of influence and control is so well entrenched that those who challenge the authority of the white male establishment to keep the control and power are viewed as outside the mainstream, radical and anti-American. Since the establishment of this country and the definition of its goals and ideals in the Constitution, the white male elite has systematically exerted its power and control over every social group in order to maintain its power. This power structure is codified in the articles of government.

Every aspect of life is controlled by this power structure. The report of wages and job distribution clearly shows that women and non-Caucasian people are restricted to those lower paying jobs in the social strata with the exception of Asian men who often move into the professional category (this seems to fit the stereotype that Asians are more proficient at math and sciences than Caucasians). Many women either support their family or provide the necessary supplemental income for husbands who do not make enough to support the family. Even by referring to a woman's income as supplemental rather than assuming that it is

natural for a woman to work at a paying job, we are propagating the stereotype which enhances the power structure of the white male establishment.

The oppression produced by this power structure is coordinated and supported by the institutions of society. For example, religion plays an important role in maintaining the power structure. Most organized religions are male led or dominated with the central powerful being, the god or god-like focus, having white male characteristics. With the exception of Buddah, who was not Caucasian and led a non Caucasian group of followers, all manifestations of the central monolithic god of western culture are male and Caucasian. It is from this white male god that all power and authority flows. This has been a very effective tool for the control of the majority. If actions are validated through religions, i.e., if God says that women must be submissive to men and obey them, there is enormous authority behind that practice. Who wants to disobey God? Biblical justifications for slavery, the persecution of the "unfaithful" and those who chose different paths of life (sinners) are used by the white male power structure for control of all groups. Religious justification for oppressive behavior seem to stand alone, unfutable.

People who question or deny what religious texts proclaim are called heretics or sinners and are forced outside of the mainstream of society. The use of such myths for control extends into the institutions of society. Social values are defined by the economic leaders of society through advertising and socialization so that every individual will be a conformist and will continue to support the capitalist patriarchy.

Reversals of Power and Backlash

In David Mamet's play Oleanna we find the traditional exercises of power seems to shift back and forth between the characters John and Carol, but, in reality, it is the Group which is powerful. In the opening act, Carol is meek and uncertain. She doesn't express herself clearly

and is a whiny, simpering ineffectual character. John is paternalistic and insensitive to Carol's needs as well as being arrogant and overconfident. The power is political, i.e., what appears to be a radical feminist group uses the poor, unsuspecting Carol as a pawn to gain some control over the functioning of the university, i.e., the books in the library, faculty tenure, etc.

The power of the group stems from the belief that they have the right to determine what others read, teach, and learn and the university administration is afraid to stand up to them. This is probably a situation where women have been harassed in the past and the Group has been looking for a situation to make their point with the university. This is, in my opinion, inappropriate use of their political power. This smacks of unthinking radicalism which is dangerous to a cause, because it makes the oppressed look like the oppressor and reduces the effectiveness and validity of achievements. The end result is that, although the Group has achieved its goal of discrediting John, it has destroyed Carol. This type of radical unthinking action makes it very difficult for real cases of discrimination and harassment to be appropriately dealt with because it damages the credibility of the feminists who work to achieve equity. While I haven't always been a moderate, I believe that radicalism backfires on the feminist movement and this play is an excellent example of how that happens.

I think that the most serious problem facing women today is the backlash against feminists and the feminist movement. I fear that boys and being socialized into traditional roles at the same rate as they were twenty years ago and that girls, though some are taught that they are equal and deserve equal treatment, are still finding it easier to fall into traditional roles. I think that women are worse off than we were thirty years ago. We still earn a disproportionately lower income than men, yet we are expected to work outside our homes as well as maintain the traditional roles of mothers and homemaker. I think that, for all our efforts we

have failed in socializing the next generation to have a more equitable outlook toward gender roles.

Recently, in the course of my job, I had to stop for gas, oil and directions. I could do the first two things by myself and did, but when I entered the garage to find someone to give me directions, I was suddenly afraid. Inside were several men and for some reason, I became very aware of how vulnerable I was. I told a friend that I felt the testosterone surging and I was afraid. I have never really felt that kind of fear before and it worries me that after all these years of fighting for our rights, I should still have to be afraid in the company of men. The sense that I was an unwelcome intruder in their male domain was very real.

I think that feminism should, in theory, offer new and productive ways of rethinking human relationships, but if it were happening in practice we would not still need shelters for women, crisis intervention units and women's groups. Most of these issues would have been resolved and relationships would have progressed beyond the battering stage.

I know that advances have been made by feminists over the years. The vote still has not been taken away, but the freedom to control our own bodies is being eroded on an almost daily basis. Until the basic freedom to choose and decide one's own course in life is an issue that no longer needs discussion, in fact ceases to be an issue, but is a fact of life, we have not accomplished what needs to be done.

Feminism is a subgroup of humanism and through this a whole new concept of life can be developed. Equality, freedom, respect, dignity, and the right to self determination will be basics that every human will enjoy. Feminists must continue to work for all the things we believe in. We must not be afraid to say we are feminists but we must understand that it is our obligation to earn these rights for all people. Only then will human relationships advance to a truly acceptable level.

In our zeal to find equality, we must not

become the oppressor and eliminate the rights of others.

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**"It is better to know some
of the questions than all of
the answers."**

James Thurber

The Light

by Aaron Butler

Life was and I was content.
Then one day I saw a light.
dim at first, then brighter and brighter

Now it blinds me.

Suddenly I realize that the light is far distant,
Above me and beyond my reach.

It's always been there.
above me and beyond my reach.
I never before realized it.
I'm in a pit. Dark and Bottomless.

The light is at the top,
but the sides of the pit are slick and steep.

I try to climb but I can't gain a hold.
Complete and utter despair.
The light is my reason for living but I can't reach it.

I've always been in this pit.
It's just that before the light I never realized it.
Now that I know, I'm unhappy.

If only I could gain the light
my life would be complete.
The light sheds some warmth out of pity,
but it never deigns to shed me light.

One day I will either gain the light,
or find some dirtier, less pure light,
let go, accept it and some Part of
me which sought the light will die,
Never to live again.

I will have that unpure, second light
but the part of me which sought the pure light,
and is now gone, makes me far less than
I was when I sought the pure light.

Perhaps, however, after a time,
that pure light will change,
not become less pure, only shift,
notice me and shed me light,
allow me to see the sides of the pit,
climb out, and join it.

The Tradition of Alienation

by Doug Al-Maini
University of Guelph

In nineteenth century philosophy, the concept of alienation played a dominant role in determining the manner in which philosophers explained the world around them. I hope to give one interpretation of the way in which alienation came about in the writings of Hegel, and how the concept of alienation was subsequently used by later philosophers. It is my contention that alienation was originally conceived by Hegel as a method which could answer the question of "how can consciousness have knowledge." However, alienation turned out to be a concept so rich in possible applications that philosophers like Marx and Feuerbach disregarded this original purpose and used it to explain other phenomena. It is not until the thinkers of the late nineteenth century, as exemplified by Kierkegaard, that the original formulation of alienation was brought into question and pondered as a plausible method of determining knowledge.

Alienation in Hegel's philosophy has been described as being "the stage of disunion which emerges from a simple unity and is subsequently reconciled in a higher differentiated unity," (1). Hegel has recognized alienation to be a stage in the progression of history; in examining the fluid world around us that is constantly engaged in the process of becoming, Hegel is able to identify and describe a phase in that process. The relevance of this phase must be considered in relation to the agenda that Hegel sets for his overarching system.

In determining his systematic philosophy, Hegel confronts a differentiated world, and in examining phenomena, he is faced with overcoming the problem of the "other." Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is intended to be an explanation of phenomena, trying to make sense of the tremendous amount of differentiation observable in the world. For Hegel, there has to be some kind of logical structure behind differentiation showing an order and progression.

From the start, Hegel is concerned with this order and rational structure. In describing consciousness, Hegel writes that

The knowledge or knowing which is at the start or is immediately our object cannot be anything else but immediate knowledge itself, a knowledge of the immediate or of what simply is. (2)

Notice that Hegel's primary concern is in determining what kind of knowledge is present in this initial state. A similar observation is made in first describing self-consciousness. In the section entitled "Independence and Dependence of Self Consciousness", Hegel begins with a dis-

cussion of how consciousness negates itself by creating the observant other which exists for consciousness in order to give selfconsciousness genesis.(3) He says that self-consciousness "exists only in being acknowledged".(4)

These are very interesting observations in Hegel's analysis of consciousness, for they predate Brentano's intentionality and seem to be saying that consciousness must be "consciousness of" something. Especially since initial consciousness has immediate knowledge, Hegel is asserting that in order for consciousness to be consciousness, it must have knowledge of some sort. Self-consciousness needs the further ontological validation that it must be acknowledged by consciousness, i.e., that the object of consciousness must be consciousness.

In a fundamental sense, ontology and epistemology are locked

up together in Hegel, and it is no coincidence that the fullest expression of being is given in a state of "Absolute Knowing". (5) An awareness of Hegel's end-point shows just how important reason and historical knowing are to Hegel. One could even be so bold as to claim that being without knowing is not really being at all, for true being only occurs in the mature state of absolute knowing.

Alienation is the historical process through which the problem of how consciousness can attain the knowledge essential to its being is surmounted. This is a problem that Kant failed to solve, because of his insistence on a noumenal world which is unknowable. The dilemma (which Hegel recognized) involved with Kant's assertion is that if we can't know the thing in itself, then any knowledge that we can have of the thing is trivial. It even ends up being no knowledge at all, for being ignorant of the thing in itself, consciousness is unable to make knowledgeable claims about the thing with any certainty. For knowledge to be achieved, the "noumenalness" of the thing must be removed or attained. Hegel has realized that there can be no formal barriers which separate consciousness from its object. Consciousness must become one with its object in order to have full understanding of it.

Hegel's theory of alienation posits a description of how the separation between consciousness and its object came about and how it can be overcome. There is in the relationship described by Hegel an understanding of (and disagreement with) the traditional notion that the ideal barrier between subject and object is insurmountable. The way in which Hegel gets around this assumption in a practical sense is to assert that the "other" never truly exists as something completely foreign and different. It is instead a derived thing (or objectification) generated from the original subject. Hence

the subject can come to know the other because the antagonistic situation of subject/object is really just a development of initial unity. Furthermore, once the other is realized to be an objectification, the barriers between subject and its object fade away, and the two become unified once more.

Thus there are two types of subjectivity being dealt with in Hegel's philosophy. First, there is the traditional subject, with definite borders between itself and the object and which in fact can be (albeit circularly) defined as that which is not object. Were Hegel to accept this dualistic conception as adequately describing existence, his own philosophy could never get off the ground. The second notion of subjectivity that Hegel projects in his system is the case for initial, immature unity, which develops into a differentiated whole that will eventually unify again in a mature state of sublated differentiation.

My basis for understanding Hegel's subjectivity in this manner comes in reading the chapter in the Phenomenology concerning lordship and bondage, wherein he describes a monolithic battle between two consciousnesses. (6) The two are clearly described as the diremptive halves which come from consciousness seeking to escape the previous dialectic it was embroiled in (namely, the inner world of appearances and the play of forces), (7) and though they first appear to each other as two objectively separate entities meeting for the first time, such is really not the case. (8) Alienation describes how this situation came about, in that consciousness objectifies its essence into another consciousness.

This introduction to the theme of alienation apparently went unnoticed by philosophers until Karl Marx brought it to attention in the Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844. (9) Marx investigates alienation in a metaphysical sense most thoroughly in his essay, Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy. Marx has two views when it comes to alienation; on the one hand he can accept it as a tool which explains history, but on the other hand, Marx shows a deep distrust for any system that posits alienation at its core. Hegel's idea of the "dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle" is described by Marx as being the "outstanding achievement of Hegel's Phenomenology." (10) Marx goes on to accept Hegel's identification of labour as being the human process through which self-creation is accomplished, and that nature is alienated abstract thought. (11)

But Marx combines this acknowledgement of Hegelian thought with a basic doubt for the true value of alienation. Marx writes that "In Hegel, therefore, the negation of the negation is not the confirmation of true being but the negation of illusory being. It is the confirmation of illusory being." (12) Marx's point is that the falsity on which alienation rests cannot be simply sublated and accepted into the very heart of the subject when the subject comes to the end of the dialectic and becomes newly unified again. Falsity may seem like a

strong word, but in every dialectic, the alienation process demands that something be objectified and perceived as foreign, while in fact the object is just a diremptive half of the initial starting point. For Marx, Hegel's dialectic reabsorbs the alienated forms of the subject into its final result and so reinforces alienation (and the falsity that goes with it) at the very core of history. For Marx, this is a monstrous conclusion, because it reinforces horribly exploitative modes of alienated being, such as capitalism.

Coupled with this critique is Marx's observation that Hegel gave too much importance to matters which are theoretical, to the point where Hegel did not really write about real human being. Marx writes how in the Phenomenology

The whole history of alienation, and of the retraction of alienation, is, therefore, only the history of the production of abstract thought, i.e. of absolute, logical, speculative thought. (13)

Marx is concerned with what is going on in the real world, and Hegel's preoccupation with speculation and abstraction condemn Hegel's system to never being able to know genuine reality. (14) In fact, this is a pretty standard criticism by Marx, and he applies it to Feuerbach's philosophy as well. (15)

In understanding Marx's critique of Hegel it may be helpful to remember that there is a difference between alienation and the dialectic. Alienation refers to objectification and creation of otherness which, for Hegel, occurs within the entire process that is the dialectic. Marx's dissension with the Hegelian system comes in a basic disagreement over the dialectic. However, Marx does realize the value of the concept of alienation and is able to transplant it out of Hegel's grand philosophy and use alienation in an investigation of societal relations.

In so doing, Marx comes upon his famous analysis of alienated labour. For Marx, labour is the way in which humanity "appropriates the external world of sensuous nature". (16) This is done so that people can provide themselves with a means to existence. (17) However, Marx observed in the world around him that many people were labouring to provide the means of existence for others. Marx saw that "the worker is related to the product of his labour as to an alien object", (18) and that furthermore

the alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, assumes an external existence, but that it exists independently, outside himself, and alien to him, and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power. (19)

The problem in dealing with Marx's theory of alienated labour is in determining how much Marx has

strayed from Hegel's original conception of alienation. If Marx (and Feuerbach before him) is true to Hegel's original idea only to the point of preserving the term "alienation", then it would be a misrepresentation to describe alienation as one of the most far reaching concepts introduced by Hegel. However, if Marx is indeed faithful to Hegel's alienation and is applying the idea to a societal analysis, then such a grandiose statement might be justified. The tremendous influence that Marx's theory of alienated labour has had in the twentieth century need not be proven here. Suffice it to say that if Marx really is just applying Hegel, it is a tribute to the richness of the concept of alienation that it was able to transcend its origins and become one of the most practically powerful philosophical developments of modern times.

In the case of Feuerbach, alienation is given a religious treatment, and is used to explain the relationship that exists between God and humanity. In a reversal of the roles that Hegel originally prescribed, Feuerbach posits humanity as the true subject which alienates its human essence into a God. (20) Feuerbach illuminates his views this way:

Religion, at least the Christian, is the relation of man to himself, or more correctly to his own nature (i.e., his subjective nature); but a relation to it, viewed as a nature apart from his own. The divine thing is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective—i.e., contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. (21)

In terminology more in keeping with that used here to describe alienation, Feuerbach reinforces this initial position by claiming that

Man—this is the mystery of religion—projects his being into objectivity, and then again makes himself an object to this projected image of himself thus converted into a subject; he thinks of himself, is an object to himself, but as an object of an object, of another being than himself. Thus here. Man is an object to God. (22)

From these quotes it should be clear that Feuerbach has taken the Hegelian notion of alienation and applied to the topic of religion. It has been written that Feuerbach has "turned speculative philosophy upside down", 23 but he has not done so in as radical a manner as this statement might imply. Granted, Feuerbach has squarely ousted God from the essential position in religion and replaced God with humanity, but he has done so in a way (using alienation) that lies directly within the tradition of speculative philosophy as it was developed by Hegel.

Again, the point arises as to how closely Marx and Feuerbach followed the Hegelian program. In one interpretation, Marx and Feuerbach stand very much in line with Hegel, because of their basic acceptance of the form of alienation. Marx and Feuerbach, in their respective analyses

of labour and religion, concur with the tenet that alienation in the form of self-objectification creates an alien power. Both of these philosophers simply borrow Hegel's original thought and apply it to topics of their own interest.

But it is precisely for this reason that I think that Marx and Feuerbach should not be considered as the true inheritors of the concept of alienation. Neither Marx nor Feuerbach concern themselves with Hegel's original agenda, which is to show how consciousness can have knowledge of something seemingly outside itself. Hegel's epistemological concerns are deeply connected to his theory of being, and the development of the theory of alienation enabled Hegel to posit an existence that can be understood as a logical structure. Marx and Feuerbach simply appropriate Hegel's alienation and apply it to their own ends.

It is not until Soren Kierkegaard begins to question the validity of any philosophical system that Hegel's alienation driven ontological/epistemological understanding of existence is really challenged. Kierkegaard, although not explicitly writing about alienation, draws a distinction between existence and systematic thought, and affirms that the two in fact do not overlap and meld into each other as Hegel would have us believe.

Instead Kierkegaard emphasizes the differences between existence and system. For Kierkegaard, existence "separates and holds the moments of existence discretely apart; the systematic thought consists of the finality that brings them together." (24) Kierkegaard is acutely aware of existence as a fluid and ever-changing thing that, while it is still existing, cannot be pinned down and defined by some system. To do so would be to remove the qualities from the thing that make it existent and turn it into something static and dead. It is only when there is no motion of change or life within the thing that it can be properly systematized. As Kierkegaard says, "The existing subject. . . is engaged in existing." (25) The world in which we live is an existent thing, flowing with vitality, and to try to make any kind of deep, metaphysical sense out of it is just not feasible. "For to be in a state of mediation is to be finished, while to exist is to become. Nor can an existing individual be in two places at the same time—he cannot be an identity of subject and object." (26)

This may seem like it has nothing to do with alienation, but if Kierkegaard's description of existence is accurate, then Hegel's alienation becomes a relatively powerless notion. Existence is the act of constantly becoming, it is to be in a state of pure possibility, (27) where the next step is not one that can be logically pre-ordained, as Hegel wishes to assert in his march towards absolute knowing. Kierkegaard is illuminating the fact that even Hegel's grand system is dead to the degree that its ending point is a predetermined thing, and so the whole process has nothing to do with real phenomena and existence. This has disastrous effects on the concept of alienation, because alienation in the form of self-objectification is Hegel as the manner by which existence creates itself

and propels itself into a higher mode of being. Notice that the fallout from Kierkegaard's observations on the nature of existence does not necessarily preclude self-objectification into an alien power from occurring. The conclusion Kierkegaard's insights reveal is that such events may not have the importance that Hegel wants to ascribe to them. For Kierkegaard, it is impossible to show that alienation eventually leads to a truer kind of being, and its value as an explaining tool must be seriously doubted.

In Kierkegaard's conception of the world, philosophical systems must be abandoned because of their basic inability to adequately describe existence. With such a realization, Hegel's original aims with alienation are finally taken up again, and the question of "what can we know?" is reap-proached. For this reason I like to think of Kierkegaard coupled with other late 19th century philosophers, such as Nietzsche, these true inheritors of the concept of alienation, because they are willing to assess it as a tool, and not just blindly apply it to observable phenomena.

1 Michael Inwood, A Hegel Dictionary, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Three Cambridge Centre, 1992), 36.

2 Georg Wilhelm Friederich Hegel, Phenomenology Of Spirit, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977) 58.

3 Hegel, 104-105.

4 Hegel, 111.

5 "Absolute Knowing" is the title of the last chapter in the Phenomenology, and it describes the state in which Spirit is completely self-aware.

6 Hegel 114-115.

7 see the chapter entitled "Force and Understanding" in the Phenomenology, 79-102.

8 Hegel, 112-114.

9 Inwood, 38.

10 Karl Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy" in Nineteenth Century Philosophy, ed. Patrick Gardiner (New York: Free Press, 1969), 265.

11 Marx, 265 & 263 respectively. Hegel's comments on the nature of labour can be found in the Phenomenology, 118-119.

12Karl Marx, 270.

13Marx, 264.

14Marx, 269.

15 In his fourth thesis on Feuerbach, Marx writes that "His work consists in resolving the religious world into its secular basis. But the fact that the secular basis deserts its own sphere and establishes an independent realm in the clouds, can only be explained by the cleavage and self contradictions within this secular basis. The latter therefore, must itself be both understood in its contradictions and revolutionized in practice." Marx 262.

16Marx, 274.

17Marx, 274.

18Marx, 273.

19Marx, 274.

20Ludwig Feuerbach, "The Essence of Religion Considered Generally" in Nineteenth Century Philosophy, ed. Patrick Gardiner (New York: Free Press, 1969), 237-238.

21 Feuerbach, 239.

22Feuerbach, 244.

23Patrick Gardiner, Nineteenth Century Philosophy, 238

24Soren Kierkegaard, "An Existential System Is Impossible", in Nineteenth Century Philosophy, ed. Patrick Gardiner, (New York: Free Press, 1969), 297.

25Kierkegaard, 299.

26Kierkegaardl 302.

27Kierkegaard, 317-320.

"The proof for the wretchedness of existence is the proof that is derived from the contemplation of its glories."

Soren Kierkegaard

Nightmare Projection

by Kim Miller

Compulsive babies slithering out
of the womb
deadly neurotic already

No movement without motive-
culture bound herds of
grinning stone and skin fondling
ideas like flesh, intentions
worn weary, worn smooth-
worn like
transparent masks
of innocence on the
terminally responsible.

"If you are going to
have a god, have a
god with character."

Dr. Timko

Untitled

by Marla Bastone

The black light flashes
the duck swims past
a new day has begun
in the old world that
has disappeared
through the church bells
a rain drop has fallen
upon my skin

Prophecy

By Elizabeth Shaffer

It's 8:00 and all's well
the town crier said.
Don't worry son, you'll get along,
it's all in your head.
The cynics shave the poor balloon
and burst it with a bang.
Ho, Ho! the empty giant roared
as all the people sang.

The crazy man is now asleep,
the lion roars no more,
and foam is floating on the sea
as dust upon the floor.
And all the crumbled ages fall
and nations turn to stone
The mighty warrior screams with pain
and the child stands alone.

Alone he views the multitude.
the silence reigns supreme.
And into every devil's eye
there shows a fateful gleam.
The angels cry, the eagle screams,
tears wet all the ground,
as heaven cries till hell's denied
and peace can then abound.

A Sartrean approach to love, sadism and masochism

by Danielle Hampton

One of the greatest sources of anguish we experience as humans, comes from the knowledge that we not only exist, but that we exist in the world with other people. We are consciousness, yet this consciousness is embodied. Our bodies are our presence in the world, they allow us to engage and interact with our surroundings. This interaction includes interpersonal relationships. Such relationships are based on the fact that we are, as Jean Paul Sartre indicates, being-for-others or being in relation to how others see us. According to Sartre, our being-for-others is problematic. As a result, he claims that all interpersonal relationships are doomed from the start.

I am being-for-others in that without the Other I would have no need for a body, I could exist as pure consciousness. I am embodied for the Other. In this sense, the Other is the foundation of my being. I become possessed by the Other because the Other sees who I am in a way that I never can. The image of my body as an object in the world is produced in the Others mind, an image I will never know I can only know my subjective consciousness. This image fixes my being leaving me feeling incomplete and finite. I can attempt to capture that image through the use of mirrors or cameras, but I will fail. These images are secondary and distorted. The only way I can try to recover my being is through the Other. Sartre claims that one can only recover one's being by absorbing the Other's freedom without absorbing the Other's being. Since the Other's being is absolute freedom I can never accomplish my goal. Even if it were possible it would be self destructive. For if I absorb the Other's freedom and thereby absorb his being, my own being-for-others would disappear since the Other is the foundation of my being. As a result, Sartre claims that all interpersonal relationships turn out in one of two ways: the Other's freedom is completely absorbed, or the Other's being is completely abandoned.

Sartre takes these ideas one step farther when he applies them to love. He claims that if love was simply a desire for physical possession it would be easily realized. However, love is much more complex. It is the wish of the lover to take hold of his freedom. This is not a desire for power - such a desire would be more readily attainable through fear. The lover does not want to enslave his beloved, this would kill his love. He has no wish to possess his beloved as one might possess an object, but rather wishes to possess his beloved's freedom as a freedom. This is the difference between love and many other types of interpersonal relationships. The lover does not fix his beloved's essence as an object of utility or instrumentality. Instead he views her in terms of her freedom and subjectivity. She has no need to feel shame from his look, because she retains all of her possibilities. The goal here is for each person to maintain his or her freedom while at the same

time allowing themselves to be absorbed by the Other for the Other's freedom. This is logically impossible. When one attempts to embrace the Other's freedom the freedom ceases to be free. One can not simultaneously be free and chained. For this reason Sartre claims love can only be understood as an ideal it can never be actualized.

Sartre examines yet another type of interpersonal relationship one might refer to as sexual desire. He claims that this desire is basic to human existence. He does not speak of sexual desire in the context of mere physical pleasure but rather as an attempt to get in touch with another's consciousness through their embodiment. Sexual organs and traits are of no relevance to this desire. It is the act of trying to become the Other rather than possess the Other. It is the attempt to do so without giving up one's own individuality. Each participant wishes to rid themselves of the separateness between them and become one yet at the same time keep one another's otherness intact. Once again the parties involved have entered into an impossible relationship.

According to Sartre those who attempt sexual or love relationships find something that more closely resembles sadism and masochism. Since it is impossible to both abandon and retain one's freedom simultaneously while one's partner does the same one eventually winds up being completely possessed while the other becomes completely possessive. However Sartre insists that even this type of interpersonal relationship can never be realized in its absolute form. For the masochist can never completely abandon his subjectivity just as the sadist can never view the Other as strictly an object. The masochist will attempt to become pure objectivity for the sadist relying completely on the Other for his or her very existence. The masochist will try to serve the sadist's every need. In doing so he or she will begin to conjure up images of what would most please the sadist. In this sense the masochist's subjectivity once again emerges. Also regardless of the tortures being given the masochist determines when it is too much to bear. The masochist determines when to beg for mercy. Something that is pure objectivity can make no such choices. The sadist in turn discovers the masochist's subjectivity when the victim returns the sadist's look. In this look the sadist recognizes the Other's freedom which he had wished to enslave. The masochist once again becomes an individual and the sadist realizes his failure.

Sartre concludes that all forms of interpersonal relationships are flawed. One can never succeed in such endeavors. However he also admits that we must continue to strive to make these connections regardless of their inevitable collapse. We are in this world with others and although that presents many problems, we could not survive otherwise.

The Only

By Aaron Butler

Of history I know little.
People known as my ancestors.
Many years before my birth
created horrible weapons
designed only to kill themselves.
These weapons were called
"Nuclear weapons". Then my
ancestors in their infinite
anger and stupidity leased
those weapons on themselves
destroying both themselves and
the other unexplained entity
which occupied the earth
with them. I know not what
it was. I only know it was
called "Nature"

and now I walk alone.

Through the wreck and rubble
I travel without aim
Life is just a trouble.
Death was just a game.

Few canned goods here and there.
found in shelters left too early.
Their dead faces too much to bear.
Their bodies too burnt to bury.

Of the few who stayed in long enough.
Only I had what it takes.
Of those who looked for food.
Only I know how to kill.

If only my ancestors had realized
what a child they had created.
Stopped and thought about it.
before they built the bomb.

Was it really Oedipus' fault?

by Elizabeth Shaffer

One of the things that Oedipus, in the Greek tragedy *Oedipus Tyrannus*, cannot seem to avoid is fate. He is doomed to live the tragedy inherent in man's struggle to control destiny. Often considered a play rich in philosophic meaning, the drama regards human existence as one where we are both responsible for our lives and have no real hope of controlling their circumstances. However, in order to consider this a philosophic work, one must consider what philosophy means.

To say that one has a particular philosophy of life refers to a way that person views life or some aspect of life. We have a frame of reference for occurrences logically based on whatever premises we hold true. We may hold that we are part of an understandable natural universe, as many Greeks did, or we may suppose a universe that is mysterious, puzzling or absurd, as do some Eastern thinkers and existentialists. Strangely, it appears that philosophy is logical, even if it views life or the universe as illogical. This may be because we can think something, like fate, has a pattern that is logical, or can view it as a happenstance, chaotic collection of incidents, but the thinking that we use to arrive at either view is a way of connecting events as we see them into a logical framework. Other facts are then interpreted in this framework, or the framework is adjusted. Because philosophy is a logical process, and because it involves creating frameworks to assess or understand the world or life, it involves a constant process of questioning and assessing. It seeks not only for a framework wherein to see the world, but for an accurate and complete one.

One of the best ways to look at any philosophical view is to see if "it fits", or seems accurately and reasonably to explain whatever aspect of life or the universe it pretends to explain. To this view, philosophy, in a tragedy or philosophic essay, involves questioning and answering questions about its propositions about life and the reality it intends to portray. *Oedipus Tyrannus* concerns man's life. Sophocles portrays life as one in which man, despite how he tries, has little control over fate. He puts forth this view early in the play, then addresses, through plot and language, various questions concerning this view. In this way it is philosophical. It proposes a framework in which to see life, and then addresses issues about his view, its accuracy and truth.

As a philosophic framework in which to see the world, *Oedipus Tyrannus* is simple. Sophocles contends that if you look at life you are forced to conclude that fate, or the circumstances of man's life, are beyond his control. This is best supported by Sophocles in a plot that shows that despite warnings or knowledge of the future, Oedipus can, and will, do what is predicted, or destined, by fate. Oedipus' parents are told that their son will kill his father and marry the mother. This announcement seems to offer them ample opportunity to

change fate and prevent this awful occurrence. They do try to do so by sending Oedipus far away to die. But, saved from death (by fate of course, and by man's actions) he instead lived where he had no knowledge of them or contact with them. Unknown to them, he also heard about the prophecy about himself, and, fearing for his parents, not realizing that he was adopted, he fled his home in Corinth, travelling until he came to what was his real parents' country. There he killed a man, married a woman, and sought to live a happy existence.

Looking at life's twists, at the strange occurrences possible even in everyday lives, Sophocles asks us to look at Oedipus' life and decide if it is reasonable to assume fate to be uncontrollable and unavoidable. Oedipus has inadvertently done the very thing that he and his parents feared and tried to avoid. He has murdered his father and married his mother despite everyone's efforts to prevent it. This portrays one philosophical aspect of the play.

In the other philosophical point that Sophocles makes, he contends that despite our lack of control over the circumstances of our life, we are still responsible not only for our actions but for their outcomes. This is seen in both the plot of the play and in Oedipus' words at the end. Thebes, the kingdom of, first, Oedipus' father, and later, Oedipus, is troubled by plagues and pestilence in retribution for Oedipus' crimes in killing his father and marrying his mother. Only when Oedipus is punished will Thebes be spared. It is also shown by Oedipus' words and grief as he realizes what has happened. Despite the fact that he did not know or intend his crimes, he reacts in horror and grief at his actions, blinding himself to avoid tormenting sights. Though readers may have assumed him innocent of the worst of his crimes, he himself sees himself as damned. At the last Oedipus cries, "I have damned myself." and "My sins are mine alone to bear (p. 31)."

In a less philosophical way, Sophocles avoids the real question of why Oedipus is damned if he couldn't control his life. We are not told whether it is a character flaw, an unfair universal law or our very urge to control life that damns us. Thus the tragedy is certainly not pure philosophy. Philosophy, by itself, must face such questions and make at least an attempt to answer them in some logical way. A Greek tragedy such as *Oedipus Tyrannus*, or a play such as Sartre's *No Exit*, can raise philosophical questions and propose a philosophical framework in which to view life. However, since they are dramas and not pure philosophy, they do not have to seek answers or address all the issues raised by their perspective. They can avoid the worst problems of philosophy, whether they are really accurate, complete or entire in their philosophical view.

Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, L. Berkowitz & T. Brunner, Eds. and Trans. (1970). New York : W. W. Norton

No Exit

by Kim Miller

In darkness I awake

drenched in incense dreams

and cold sheets-

I

cling to pillows

&

moonlight

barely breathing

while awaiting

the final dawn...

**"I don't know if I am now a man dreaming I am a butterfly
or if I was then a butterfly dreaming I was a man."**

Chuang Tzu

No. LXII

By K. M. Miller

In response to a query

received in 1908 from

the same source

and to others

later received

from the same

source

and to others

later received

from the same

source